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# Local

Posted on Fri, Mar. 04, 2005

## Ban of small vest-piercing pistol sought

N.J.'s two senators said the gun had no legitimate public use.

By Donna De La Cruz  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** - The Five-SeveN pistol is small enough to fit in a pocket, but it packs a big punch: Its bullets can penetrate a bulletproof vest.

One of the guns was taken from an alleged drug dealer in Camden County in December, and now federal lawmakers from New Jersey and New York want them out of the hands of the public for good.

Sens. Jon Corzine and Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey and Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Eliot L. Engel, all Democrats, yesterday introduced a bill that would make it illegal for anyone except a police officer to possess the pistol.

In November, the Homeland Security Department issued an "Officer Safety Alert" calling the pistol a "defeating handgun." The alert said police in Trumbull, Conn., had seized such a pistol and noted it was "advertised as being able to penetrate 48 layers of Kevlar at 50 meters."

The lawmakers said there was no legitimate reason, such as hunting, for members of the public to own such a weapon.

"This is not a Second Amendment issue," Corzine said. "Who needs one of these? The only reason is violence."

The Protect Law Enforcement Armor Act also would prohibit the gun and bullets from being made and sold in the States.

Camden County Prosecutor Vincent P. Sarubbi urged lawmakers to support the bill, calling it a test of the state's commitment to public safety.



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"If we let this one slip by, the floodgates will open," he said.

The Five-SeveN found in Camden County had been bought in Philadelphia using a false name and a Security number, Sarubbi said.

Peter Newsham, assistant chief of the Washington Metropolitan Police, said the gun had penetrated in a department test.

"The danger of this gun is that it can be concealed," he said. He, too, urged Congress to support

Michael Barnes, president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, challenged the National Rifle Association to defend the pistol, even daring NRA chief executive Wayne LaPierre to don a bullet and have the pistol tested. The NRA did not immediately return a telephone call for comment.

The pistol is made by the Belgian company FN Herstal, which has a U.S. division in McLean, Va. The director of sales and marketing for the U.S. division, said that the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms had approved the pistol and that the only ammunition available to the public were cartridges fired by the agency.

The bullets that can penetrate Kevlar vests are sold only to law enforcement and military agencies. The ammunition is released and shipped only from a U.S. Customs-controlled warehouse, DeMilt said.

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